

Zoning: The Foundation of Park Management

Management zoning is a planning tool that helps to define appropriate resource condition, compatible use, and appropriate facilities. Most of the National Seashore is zoned under natural or cultural heritage zoning. Each of these two zones is made up of subzones that further specify management prescriptions. There are two other zoning classifications of lesser prevalence: the development zone and special use zone. A brief overview of each type of zoning is listed below.

NATURAL HERITAGE ZONES

Wilderness

Wilderness zoning is managed for preserving wilderness values, biological diversity, and ecological integrity. Visitors would have opportunities to be immersed in nature without intrusions. In areas federally designated as wilderness, access by foot or by horse is permitted, providing opportunities for solitude.

Natural

Natural zoning acts as a transitional zone between wilderness and developed zones. It connects developed sites via multi-use access corridors. Natural resources and processes would remain as undisturbed as possible, with minimal development including restrooms and trail access. There is a lower expectation of solitude and potentially more impact from civilization in this zone.

Reserves

Reserves are pristine areas with access limited, to protect areas of biological significance. Passive and low-impact visitor activities are permitted within reserves. Park staff and partners conduct research and monitor resources to maintain the reserves’ biological integrity.

Marine Protected Areas

A marine protected area is any area of the marine environment that provides increased protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.

CULTURAL HERITAGE ZONES

Cultural Landscapes Zone

The land in this zone is altered from its natural state for the purpose of preserving the historic agricultural scene. This zone preserves working agricultural landscapes as part of Point Reyes National Seashore and the northern district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Comprised of dairy and beef cattle ranches and fences, views in this zone are pastoral in nature.



ALEXANDRA KRUSE

Historic Sites

Historic resources in this zone are actively managed and preserved to maintain their significance. Many of the structures would be adaptively managed, and some modification would occur to accommodate visitor use. Sites like the historic Lighthouse and Pierce Ranch allow visitors to experience the past through park programming and self-guided trails. Most sites are easy to reach, offer interpretation of the resources, and often have amenities/facilities such as picnic tables, restrooms and parking.

Archeological Zone

This zone, which has a concentration of archeological sites, is designed to protect evidence of past human use including sacred sites of the Coast Miwok. Sites would not be marked, to prevent disturbance, and sacred sites could be accessed only with an appropriate authority. Visitor use in this zone would be limited to activities that do not impact archeological resources.

Development Zone

In areas designated as a development zone the natural environment is often modified to accommodate visitor and park operation needs. Roads, visitor centers, parking, and other facilities provide access and services but limit opportunities for solitude.

Special Uses

Special use zoning is found in only a few areas managed by Point Reyes National Seashore. Areas in this zone are impacted as permitted in special use agreements. The land in these areas is often open to the public, but noise and visual intrusions are prevalent. Also, public lands managed by others, such as state parks, are designated as special use areas and have specific management and visitor use guidelines.

Use these descriptions to evaluate the five concepts in the following pages.



ALEXANDRA KRUSE



BRUCE FARNSWORTH